

THE WORLD OF FINANCE - A FEASIBILITY STUDY

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I. PROBLEM BACKGROUND

In 1965, a group of university professors from The Ohio State University and the University of Illinois hypothesized that a major difficulty in making industrial arts education relevant was the lack of an adequately conceptualized body of basic knowledge, inputs from contemporary industrial experts, and systematic development of a thoroughly tested and effective instructional system. From the United States Office of Education, they sought financial support which would enable them to conduct a study which would determine whether overcoming these problems would result in improved instruction which in fact would provide for technological literacy in future generations of our industrialized society.

The Industrial Arts Curriculum Project was funded, and by 1971 it made available to the public two exemplary integrated instructional systems for secondary school use. They are known as "The World of Construction" and "The World of Manufacturing". These programs, each field tested nationally for a period of three years, are now widely acclaimed by industrialists, educators, and students as being effective means to acquainting youth with their man-made environments, the systems and people which created them, and their individual and collective roles in affecting economic change through the free enterprise system, both as producers and as consumers.

Business education has been plagued by the same problems as those which faced industrial arts education. Whatever the inputs of the current

system, most youth leave the formal educational system with little practical knowledge of the "world of finance," and how it affects them and how they should affect it. Self examination in most cases will reveal that what goes on in the financial section of most establishments is a kind of mystery. In most cases the mystery applies equally well to personal or national or international finance.

What is money, symbolically rather than its obvious real nature? What is a "good" loan, insurance plan, or estate plan? What is the basic function of possession, place, and time utility, and what significance do they have for me? In a relatively brief lifetime, how does one make the most of the financial resources he will allocate? What financial services are available, and how do I use them intelligently? These representative questions, of the kinds members of our society must answer, are not commonly asked in knowledge quiz shows or on school examinations. This is probably because most persons are ill prepared to answer them, since they are not dealt with in the average formal educational program. It seems, then, to be the intent of society to have students learn the answers, if at all, in the "school of hard knocks". That this is humanly and economically inefficient goes almost without saying.

The same principal investigators who guided the worlds of construction and manufacturing through to finished "products", through discussions with persons in the financial community, are convinced that there is a void in basic knowledge about "the world of finance" and that it can be filled using

procedures and strategies similar to those used in producing a systematic and effective study of the goods-producing input-process-output system of industry. The nature of these are spelled out in the attached journal report.

The failings of our educational system, with regard to its inability to communicate basic knowledge about business or finance, can probably be attributed primarily to two factors. ^① The first has to do with the lack of an adequate conceptualization of that knowledge. Without this, a viable program could only result by coincidence. ^② The second factor relates to the first. It is that the public, constitutionally in control of the education of its youth, has not demanded of its schools that such knowledge be an essential element of the education of all youth. This is perhaps a chicken and egg proposition. Without a viable program, public pressure will likely not be exerted, and without public pressure a viable program will likely not be developed.

A feasibility study, to determine whether a body of business or financial knowledge can be conceptualized, is an opening wedge in any resolution of the above dilemma. If a structured body of knowledge can be conceptualized, then the next step of developing instructional programs which adequately sample it can be undertaken. This proposal presents a plan for conducting a feasibility study.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this feasibility study are to:

- 1) identify the "big ideas" or major concepts in finance, concentrating on man's "efficient actions"
- 2) codify or order these concepts into a structure or conceptual framework;

- 3) determine effective and desirable strategies and tactics for a course of study, and outline the course; and
- 4) prepare a proposal for the funding of the full development required, including field testing, revisions, and evaluation.

III. PROCEDURES *

The activities of this feasibility study are aimed at the achievement of the objectives listed above. The procedures to be employed are briefly described below. A PERT chart and a list of the activities are attached. These items provide the reader with a time-task orientation (see Appendix A).

At the outset, the project staff will analyze the available literature in the finance field. Following this content analysis, resource persons from business and industry and schools, colleges, and universities will be consulted. From this analysis, a tentative list of the "big ideas" will be arrayed.

Using selected principles of classification, a logical structure of the concepts of finance will be generated. Among the principles of classification to be employed are 1) elements (concepts) of a context (class of concepts) must be totally inclusive of the context or class, 2) the elements should be relatively mutually exclusive, and 3) the classification should be operationally adequate. A single criterion of classification will be followed, i.e. that all concepts must be verbal nouns, or gerunds, that connote "action" or "doing".

Once the structure is judged adequate, course strategies and tactics will be considered. A course syllabus will be generated indicating the content and method of the program. Consultants will be employed to improve

and refine the outline.

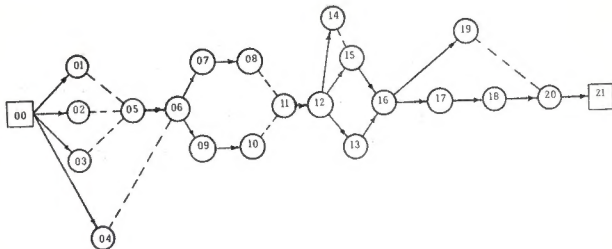
Working closely with potential school field testing sites, a funding proposal for the comprehensive and complete development of the program will be prepared. Based upon past experience, funds in the magnitude of \$5,000 per developed class hour of instruction will need to be secured.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

Throughout the feasibility study, a steering committee will assist the project staff in planning, organizing, and controlling the effort. The Co-Directors of the Industrial Arts Curriculum Project will be available as consultants to direct and monitor all project activities. Financial arrangements and all fiscal matters will be established on guidelines agreed to by the State Department of Education, the Newark Board of Education and the Business & Industrial Coordinating Council.

APPENDIX A
PERT Chart for Feasibility Study
"The World of Finance"

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Start
SEPTEMBER
1972

Formulation

Concept
Structure

Course
Outline

Funding
Proposal

End
MARCH
1973

APPENDIX A (con't)

ACTIVITY

00-01	Review finance literature
00-02	Consult with leaders in business and industry
00-03	Consult with teachers and professors
00-04	Establish membership of Project Steering Committee
01-05	Dummy
02-05	Dummy
03-05	Dummy
05-06	Develop draft taxonomy of concepts
04-06	Dummy
06-07	Steering Committee reviews structure of concepts
07-08	Steering Committee assists in refinement of structure
06-09	Other consultants review structure of concepts
09-10	Consultants assist in refinement of structure
08-11	Dummy
10-11	Dummy
11-12	Refine and firm up structure of concepts
12-13	Develop or adopt teaching-learning strategy and tactics
13-16	Review by curriculum and learning specialists
12-14	Establish program review task force
14-15	Dummy
12-15	Develop "story" of course built around concepts
15-16	Review by task force (teachers, administrators, business, industry)
16-17	Refine course outline and procedures
16-19	Establish field testing and evaluation plans
17-18	Review by Steering Committee
18-20	Draft full-scale development proposal for funding
19-20	Dummy
20-21	Refine and submit proposal to a funding agency